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LETTER DATED 3 SEPTEMBER 1996 FROM THE PERMANENT REPRESENTATIVE OF THE RUSSIAN FEDERATION TO THE UNITED NATIONS ADDRESSED TO THE SECRETARY-GENERAL

I have the honour to transmit to you the text of a statement issued on 3 September 1996 by the Government of the Russian Federation. I should be grateful if you would have that text and this letter circulated as an official document of the Security Council.

(Signed) S. LAVROV

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Annex

Statement issued on 3 September 1996 by the Government of the Russian Federation

On the morning of 3 September, United States armed forces launched a missile attack on Iraq. The motive was the need to force the Iraqi authorities to cease military action in Kurdistan.

The Government of the Russian Federation considers the United States military operation to be an inappropriate and unacceptable reaction to recent events in northern Iraq - where there is a long history of instability and where there is now systematic intervention by outside forces - especially as the Iraqi leadership, as a result of efforts undertaken by the Russian Federation and others, had announced that it was beginning to withdraw its forces from Kurdistan to their former positions.

In the light of growing tension in the region, the Russian Federation cautioned against the use of force, pointing to its dangerous regional and international repercussions. Unfortunately, another course of action was preferred in Washington.

The Russian Federation urges the cessation of all military action in Iraq threatening the sovereignty and territorial integrity of that country. The situation must be defused as soon as possible by political means. The Russian Federation will promote that process in the most energetic fashion.

In broader terms, the time has finally come to reflect on what the endless dragging out of a post-conflict settlement in the area of the Persian Gulf will lead to. Reliance on the use of force in relation to Iraq is producing newer and newer crises in the region. Iraq must see a real chance of emerging from its international isolation, needless to say on the basis of strict observance of the relevant resolutions of the Security Council.